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1

The Foundations of Student Affairs: A Guide to the Profession

Dallas Long

Student affairs is a large, complex area of campus operations and is comprised of many departments with professionals from a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Long provides a short history of the student affairs profession, followed by an overview of the departments in a typical student affairs division and the responsibilities and goals of the professionals in those departments. Long also describes the values that guide the work of student affairs professionals and the contemporary challenges they face.

The classroom is not the sole province of student learning. Learning is interwoven throughout the students' college experience—from the day they move into their first dormitory as freshmen until the day they hold a diploma in hand. They are shaped by their experiences—the lessons in conflict management from sharing living spaces with other students, the leadership skills acquired in leading a student organization, the critical thinking honed by challenging academic work, and an emerging sense of identity as they make meaning out of their experiences. Student learning takes place in a classroom, but the college or university itself is the classroom. There is no doubt that college is a transformative experience for students. Student learning is, therefore, also about student development.

There are many experts on student development at every college, university, and community college in the nation. They work in a variety of scenes—as academic advisors who help students select majors and build their class schedules; as residential life staff who supervise the students living in resi-

dence halls; as admissions officers who help students decide if the college is the right fit; as career counselors who assist students with finding the right internships and the right careers that fit their talents and aspirations. All of these professionals are as focused on student learning as the English professor who strives to improve students' writing skills. These professionals develop students' cognitive and interpersonal skills, foster leadership, ethics, and cultural understanding. They also stress the importance of wellness, help establish the students' identities, and spark their exploration of careers and of service to society. Student learning encompasses a breadth of people who educate predominantly outside of the classroom. They belong to the domain of education called *student affairs*. The field has a long history in higher education and, over the years, has been called *student personnel*, *student services*, *student development*, and other names. *Student affairs* is the most common phrase today.

The purpose of this chapter is to serve as a primer on the profession of student affairs. Who are the people and what are the functions that comprise student affairs organizations at colleges and universities? How did student affairs evolve as a profession within the academy? What are the core values that guide their work? What are the emerging trends and issues that are transforming student affairs today? This chapter answers each question with an overview of the history, values, essential competencies, functions, and new directions for the field of student affairs. It will provide a foundation for librarians who want to collaborate with student affairs professionals and will help librarians identify values, issues, and trends that they share with their student affairs colleagues.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student affairs as a distinct profession within higher education—with graduate programs, professional associations, journals, and scholarship—is a relatively new phenomenon. However, the roots of the student affairs profession reach all the way back to the colonial era and the earliest years of American higher education. The doctrine of *in loco parentis* (literally "in place of the parent") empowered colleges and universities to manage students closely, as students were viewed in those times as emotionally immature and requiring strict adult supervision.[1] Colonial colleges were often poorly staffed, with faculty serving as live-in teachers who supervised the students in the dormitories and dining halls as well as in the classrooms. The faculty developed

rules and regulations that governed students' behavior, conduct, and dress, and they enforced college rules and expectations even when students were not on the college premises.[2]

By the mid-1800s, academic life at American colleges and universities had changed radically. The faculty at this time were significantly influenced by European—predominantly German—universities. European universities viewed the faculty's exclusive responsibility to be the training of the intellect. Subsequently, American faculty began to earn doctorates in large numbers, developed expertise in specific disciplines, and maintained active research agendas. They began training graduate students who shared the faculty's interests and who participated in the faculty's research pursuits better than undergraduate students. As the faculty became subject experts, they had little time for or interest in tending to matters of undergraduate student discipline and mentorship. At the same time, students gradually rebelled under the strict discipline and were not satisfied with merely classical programs of study. Instead, students developed an interest in extracurricular activities to educate the whole student: intellect, spirit, and body. Literary societies, fraternal organizations, campus publications, sports teams, and debate and student clubs emerged as informal but integral aspects of college and university life.[3]

By the turn of the twentieth century, faculty involvement in student discipline had significantly diminished. Elizabeth Nuss states, "The paternalism associated with colonial colleges … had given way to almost complete indifference."[4] Students participated in their own governance, creating student governments, drafting honor codes, and adjudicating allegations of rule violations. In the 1920s, the first administrators were hired. Their principal area of work was student personnel matters. The presidents of Harvard and many land grant universities appointed the first "deans of men" (later "deans of students") to investigate student conduct and enforce university rules.

Many of the traditional functions of the student affairs profession emerged in the early part of the 1900s. Student health services developed as physicians joined the faculty, either as professors of medicine or as attending physicians. College staff were hired to monitor the students' academic records and to advise students on vocational guidance and job placement. John Seiler Brubacher and Willis Rudy observed that "in the years following World War I, the student personnel movement gained national recognition and professional stature. It was becoming self-conscious, confident, and

widely influential."[5] The national professional associations were founded around this time. Deans of men, deans of women, and other staff who were focused on student personnel issues had previously worked in relative isolation, but now they corresponded and met to share ideas and concerns related to their work.

The core values of the student affairs profession gained widespread recognition and acceptance in higher education with the publication of the *Student Personnel Point of View*, a landmark report issued in 1937 by the American Council on Education. The report emphasized the education of the whole student—intellect, spirit, and personality—and insisted that attention must be paid to the individual needs of each student. The report was revised in 1949 and proposed a comprehensive suite of student services that represented thirty-three functional areas. The guidelines proposed in the *Student Personnel Point of View* provided the philosophical and organizational foundations for the student affairs profession as it stands today.[6]

The relationship between students and colleges and universities changed significantly during the 1960s. The legal concept of *in loco parentis* was greatly eroded by the courts. The US Supreme Court's decision in *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* in 1961 defined a person over the age of 18 years as a legal adult. Subsequent court rulings granted students a right to due process and viewed the relationship between students and colleges and universities as largely contractual in nature—if students paid their tuition and met the college or university's published academic requirements, they were entitled to a diploma. Consequently, student discipline diminished as the student affairs professional's most crucial role; instead, the critical purpose turned to educating the students on making appropriate choices and decisions.

Simultaneously, student activism proliferated on campuses. Crises erupted at many universities such as Kent State University that resulted in student deaths, injuries, and property damage. As pressures in the campus environments increased, student affairs professionals were tasked with greater roles in conflict resolution, communication, and social justice.[7]

In the 1960s and 1970s, the student affairs profession established a theoretical base as the framework for its knowledge and practice. Many theories that explained student development emerged in the fields of education, psychology, and sociology. Student affairs professionals and the professional associations embraced the advances in student development theories, and graduate programs were founded that included student development theo-

ries as the cornerstone of the curriculum. The marriage of professional practice and theory received profound attention in the student affairs field with the release of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)'s 1972 report *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education: A Return to the Academy.* The report argued that student affairs professionals could not have a significant impact on students' intellectual, psychosocial, or emotional growth without first understanding the motivations, abilities, and environments which drive, create, and define students.[8] Consequently, the report called for student affairs professionals to collaborate with faculty, participate actively in the learning process, and create curricular experiences that spur student development inside the classroom as well as outside.[9]

The student affairs profession matured in the 1980s and 1990s, with much professional practice grounded in student development theory. Many of the theories, however, were developed with a "traditional" undergraduate student in mind—between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two years, usually white, and most frequently male. The intervening decades challenged student affairs professionals on a new definition of a student.

During this twenty-year period, the diversity of students increased in every respect.[10] The number of African American, Hispanic, and Native American students enrolled in higher education grew at all types of colleges and universities. Women students increased to more than 60 percent of college students nationwide. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students were significantly more visible on college campuses. Online education brought a new face of students—older, with full-time work or family obligations, and remaining geographically distant from the campus.

Community building, advising, and career development were not the only areas in which student affairs professionals were challenged to adapt to an online learning environment. Student affairs professionals and scholars noted that each diverse group of students brought new needs and interests, and many student development theories were revised with new research specific to the growth of each group. A strong understanding of diversity and its implications for student affairs practice became an essential competency for student affairs professionals.

The globalization of higher education in the 1990s and 2000s has certainly affected the student affairs profession. The American model of student affairs practice and the organization of student affairs functions spurred great interest at colleges and universities in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. The

Fulbright Scholar program facilitated the placement of American student affairs professionals at colleges and universities abroad, and the Association of College and University Housing Officers and the Association of College Unions added *International* to their names to highlight the inclusion of colleagues at colleges and universities outside North America.[11]

Student affairs professionals in North America also began to integrate international perspectives into their work as well. As the number of American students who participate in study abroad programs has grown over the past twenty years, student affairs professionals have addressed the needs of their students abroad and have studied how students' experiences abroad have shaped their subsequent identity and learning.[12] The heightened security in the years following the attacks on September 11, 2001, has also brought attention to international students studying at American colleges and universities. Student affairs professionals have delicately addressed the increased government scrutiny international students face but also recognized the need to educate themselves and their communities on the values and cultures the students bring to the campuses.[13]

Nuss observes that student affairs was established as a profession to support the academic mission of colleges and universities and to foster the development of the student intellectually, psychosocially, and emotionally.[14] The education of the whole student is likely to remain the core focus of student affairs in the future, but student affairs professionals will be challenged to think about educating the student differently. How do student affairs professionals create a meaningful sense of community for students in a virtual classroom? What should intellectual, psychosocial, and emotional development look like for adult students? Does identity development progress differently for minority students than for white students? These are only a few of the questions that pose significant challenges for the future of theory and practice in student affairs.

THE VALUES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

"Values are the essences of philosophy that guide our actions in important ways," writes Robert Young, a leading voice in student affairs scholarship.[15] This section outlines the fundamental values and best practices, identified by Young and others, that bridge the diversity of student affairs and direct the way that student affairs professionals manage their services, programs, and policies. Young identified the following values as those most fundamentally

held by student affairs professionals throughout the history of the profession.[16] These values provide the greatest context for student affairs practice.

Educating the Whole Student

Student affairs is committed to the ideas that student learning does not occur exclusively within the classroom and that college affects students profoundly in many different dimensions. Essentially, student affairs professionals accept that college is a critical period of life during which students discover a meaningful identity and develop core values for how they will perceive and experience their adult lives. This holistic view of education focuses on the growth of the intellectual and emotional capacities of students, as well as their development of a stable sense of identity, interpersonal skills, moral and spiritual values, ethics, career goals and vocational skills, and physical wellness. Subsequently, student affairs professionals deliberately create programs, services, and experiences that will advance the students' growth in one or more dimensions of their lives.

Care for Students

Student affairs professionals respect students as individuals who matter and who have dignity. They recognize that each student is unique in his or her own personal experiences, circumstances, and needs. Accordingly, each student deserves attention, respect, and fair treatment. Every interaction with a student should serve the student's best interests.

The underlying value is care. Student affairs professionals must ultimately care about the well-being of the students they serve. On a higher level, the value of care is demonstrated through student affairs professionals' advocacy for special groups of students. Student affairs professionals educate university administration and others on the needs of special populations of students in order to change policies or procedures that remedy disadvantages or unfair circumstances. Additionally, care is a fundamental value that student affairs professionals strive to instill in students. This generally takes the form of service learning, as students learn to understand the situations of others and want to advocate on their behalf.

Service to Students and to the University

The underlying fundamental mission of student affairs, however, is to serve; the profession exists to ensure that students are safe, cared for, well treated,

and (more or less) satisfied with their higher education. Young suggests that the value of service inherent to the profession extends not only to students but to faculty as well; to "provide teachers of subject matters with information about their students—when, where and how they find significant experiences inside and outside the classroom."[17] Service to students may seem an obvious value of the profession, given its name *student* affairs. Nonetheless student affairs represents such a wide and diverse range of functions that many student affairs professionals may be in direct contact with students infrequently. Many student affairs professionals—those concerned with assessment, for example—may serve primarily administrative functions, but their overall work is still centered around services for students.

Community

Dennis Roberts, a leading expert in community development, characterized community as "the binding together of individuals toward a common cause or experience."[18] Building a sense of community between students has many educational benefits, including the potential to create opportunities to develop leadership skills; instill a sense of belonging for students who might otherwise be marginalized; instill empathy and responsibility for violations of the community's standards; and advance interpersonal skills through communication and conflict resolution. Other benefits of community are not strictly educationally meaningful but contribute to a safe and healthy environment. Incidents of vandalism, property theft, and assaults decrease when students perceive a relationship with each other and with their surroundings.[19] Students are also more likely to persist to graduation if others value their involvement.[20]

Equality and Social Justice

Equality is at the center of many campus issues. As a value of the student affairs profession, equality originated in student discipline cases and demonstrated the college or university's commitment to fair proceedings and due process. However, equality for student affairs professionals today is more concerned with fair access to resources and treatment. Admissions, financial aid, student discipline, and health services are frequent areas of higher education in which students are concerned about a lack of fairness in the distribution of opportunities and services. Student affairs professionals tread a difficult territory—they are often charged with developing policies and pro-

cedures that ensure equal access and treatment, while also needing to explain the rationale to students who perceive policies and procedures as unjust.

Social justice as a value of the student affairs profession expands on this concept of equality. Scott Rickard defines social justice as "fairness and equity in the distribution of opportunity, in the treatment of individuals, in the assurance of personal and economic security, and in the protection of civil and human rights."[21] He identifies ways in which student affairs professionals promote social justice in higher education—by ensuring that the campus is committed to remedying policies or procedures which historically disadvantaged groups of people, that the campus serves as a model of fairness and inclusion for all people, and that staff and students are encouraged to recognize and be prepared to remedy inequality within the campus and the surrounding community.

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Core values create the underlying culture of the profession, but how do student affairs professionals design and implement programs that will reflect these values on the front lines? Core values such as caring, counseling, and faith focus on improving the individual and require that the student affairs professional possess finely honed interpersonal skills. Student affairs professionals must listen carefully, observe nonverbal cues, and be insightful into the students' backgrounds and concerns. Other core values such as community development, social justice, and career exploration are contextual in nature—demanding student affairs professionals perceive the complex layering of the campus environment and how the interaction between individuals supports or inhibits student development and success.

Consequently, student affairs professionals must be skilled in a multitude of interpersonal and contextual skills. Eight core competencies, identified by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, are expected of new student affairs professionals.[22] Many graduate programs in student affairs have adopted curriculum and practicum experiences that help graduate students develop the core competencies they will need to succeed as new student affairs professionals.

Effectively Working with Diverse Populations

Students are increasingly more diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual ori-

entation, socioeconomic status, and religion. Each special population has encountered unique barriers and obstacles in higher education, including disparity in admissions, financial aid, housing, and campus climate. Student affairs professionals are actively engaged in making their campuses more welcoming and accessible to the increasing diversity of students. However, student affairs professionals recognize that advocacy is difficult without truly understanding the perspectives of the students.

Student affairs professionals must develop a sophisticated range of multicultural competencies: appreciation for diversity and a thorough, deep knowledge of the cultural values of the students at their colleges and universities. They must be able to perceive the organizational barriers that exist at the campus, demonstrate their genuine concern for minority students' success, and work with college and university administrators to develop strategies for creating a welcoming, inclusive environment. Self-awareness is also important for student affairs professionals; an individual who is not aware of his or her own identity and cultural values cannot perceive how others are shaped by their own identities and cultural values.[23]

Community Building and Development

Building a sense of community between students is complex but has many advantages for a college or university. Such benefits include creating a welcoming space for difficult discussions and student learning outside the classroom, bringing the campus together in a time of crisis, reducing unwanted incidents such as vandalism, and creating an enduring loyalty to the college or university after the students have graduated. Student affairs professionals shape the process of community development, but first they must decide what the "community" is that they are shaping—students residing on a floor of a residence hall, the entire population of first-year students, adult learners in an online environment, or all the students, faculty, and staff on the campus. Student affairs professionals must also decide what a healthy community looks like. Is it one that follows rules and experiences few disciplinary measures, or is it one that encourages and respects diverse viewpoints and perspectives? What does a healthy community look like that encourages both?

Community building is therefore a very intentional process for student affairs professionals. Many models of community development emphasize the students' building of the community through their involvement with

each other and with the planning of activities that bring members of the community into direct contact. Student affairs professionals, therefore, must identify students who are potential leaders in the community; help students with envisioning programs that appeal to the larger student body; plan, manage, and market programs; and hold students responsible for their contributions. These "involved" students begin to see themselves as responsible for the programs they create, and the participants in the programs begin to see that they can initiate change themselves. Ultimately, a community emerges. If student affairs professionals negotiate the community's development carefully, they can ensure that the community reflects the values and learning outcomes that are desired. As Roberts said, "people support what they create."[24]

Conflict Resolution

Most students lack the interpersonal skills to effectively resolve conflict. Student affairs professionals help students address and resolve immediate conflicts, but they also teach life skills. While disputes between students (especially roommates) are the most common type of conflict, students experience conflicts in many areas of campus life. Conflicts may occur between students and faculty over academic performance, between student organizations and the university over speech, access to resources, or institutional culture, or between students and family regarding expectations for programs of study and career decisions.[25] Each of these types of conflict is mediated carefully by student affairs professionals.

They use different perspectives for managing conflict depending on the nature of the conflict and the parties involved. A *student development perspective* emphasizes the opportunity for growth and understanding as the desired outcome of the conflict, such as helping a student recognize a roommate's perspective. An *organizational development perspective* links the outcome of the conflict to the college or university's mission, such as negotiating for greater institutional support for an unpopular student organization on the basis of promoting diversity of opinion. A *community development perspective* emphasizes a resolution that best serves the interest of the community—whether that community is the students living in a residence hall, a student organization, or the campus as a whole. The community development perspective might be applied when resolving a conflict that affects a community—for example, a student whose loud parties disrupt the sleep of neighboring stu-

dents. Open dialog, sharing of information, patience, and the exercise of fairness and good judgment are essential for effective conflict resolution skills.[26]

Counseling/Helping

Most student affairs professionals are not trained or licensed counselors, but the overwhelming number of them must develop helping skills because of their direct contact with students. Helping skills are not necessarily intended to address a student's emotional well-being, but to provide the student with coping skills and with the context for making decisions that solve his or her own dilemmas. Counseling and helping skills increase a student affairs professional's capacity to create positive relationships and environments for students. Lawrence Brammer and Ginger MacDonald identified three characteristics that are necessary for an effective counselor or helper: *genuineness*, or truly wanting to help; *unconditional positive regard*, or respect for students who hold contrary or unpopular values; and *empathy*.[27]

Robert R. Carkhuff developed a model that provides the basis for student affairs professionals to assume a helping role.[28] In the *attending* phase of Carkhuff's model, the student affairs professional is alert to individual students and reflects the appearance and behavior of someone who is prepared to listen. A good example is a residence hall director who notices that a new student doesn't often leave her room in the residence hall. Checking in with the student reveals a problem—she isn't happy at the college.

In *responding*, the student affairs professional frames the student's concern through acknowledging his or her feelings, asking probing questions, and connecting the student's responses (e.g., "You are unhappy at the college because you are lonely."). In *personalizing*, the student affairs professional brings the student's problem back to the student's own control (e.g., "You are unhappy living at the college because you are lonely because you have not participated in any social activities and not talked to many new people."). In *initiating*, the student affairs professional prepares the student for solving the dilemma by setting a reasonable goal (e.g., the student decides, "I will attend the movie night on Friday evening and talk to three people. Then I will have met new people, and then I will not be as lonely.").

Advising

Advisors help students identify choices and make responsible decisions—an inescapable facet of so many dimensions of student affairs, from residential

life and financial aid to career services and health services. Many interpersonal characteristics essential to good helping skills are also vital interpersonal characteristics for good advising—genuineness, positive regard, and empathy. However, the advising process, unlike helping skills, requires the advisor to have a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the college or university's resources and options for an appropriate resolution. Many available options can affect a student's success very differently, such as the selection of a major that suits a student's abilities, interest, and career goals. The advisor must perceive how each possible option can affect the student. Just as students may not be certain of their information needs when they interact with a reference librarian, students are not always able to fully articulate a problem to an advisor either.

Academic advisors must have sharp interviewing skills to diagnose why something isn't working for a student and why one option might be a better alternative than another. Love and Estanek identified the advising process that student affairs professionals engaged in advising should follow: *identifying the problem* (e.g., "I don't like my chemistry class."); *gathering information about the problem* (e.g., "I don't like my chemistry class because the homework is too difficult, and I'm not interested in it"); *proposing solutions* (e.g., "Let's do a career inventory test to see if there are careers that interest you that don't require a degree in chemistry."); *implementation* (e.g., "Let's enroll you in Horticulture this next semester to see if that is a better fit for you."); and *evaluation* (e.g., "You earned a high A in the Horticulture class. Do you think horticulture is a good fit for you as a new major?").[29]

Students' advising needs not only evolve as they progress through college, but advisors report that students are also increasingly underprepared for the rigor of college courses.[30] Many students now require at least some remedial education. As a consequence, advising is an increasingly complex skill for student affairs professionals and requires a sophisticated understanding of institutional resources, plans of study, student development theory, and continuous assessment of student learning.

Leadership

Because student affairs is a profession that tolerates, by necessity, a high degree of flexibility and ambiguity, many student affairs professionals and scholars have stressed the importance of leadership as a core competency. No student's situation is exactly like another, and student affairs profession-

als are frequently faced with times where a resolution is required quickly and immediately, without the benefit of seeking input from colleagues or supervisors. Not only does student affairs work often require quick decision making, but student affairs organizations must also adapt readily to serve students differently. Emerging technologies, trends in student culture, and changing student demographics demand different responses from past practices.

The college or university's organizational culture is generally slow to adapt to change, but student affairs organizations operate within a much tighter time frame in which policy decisions, technology, and organizational structures must evolve. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon assert leadership in student affairs is really about positive change that creates a flexible organizational culture.[31]

Love and Estanek suggest that leadership in student affairs reflects the value of the profession in educating the whole student and in students building a sense of community and being accountable for the success of the organization. To have meaningful experiences that stimulate development, student affairs organizations need to be more inclusive and collaborative in decision making than other areas of colleges and universities.[32] Love claims that leadership in student affairs "incorporate[s] holism, has an emphasis on relationships, thrives on uncertainty and ambiguity, is based on trust, and thrives on bottom-up efforts. Any member of an organization … can challenge a process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart."[33]

Citizenship

Florence A. Hamrick describes citizenship as "actively attending to the well-being, continuity, and improvement of society through individual action."[34] Examples of good citizenship can range from implementing green initiatives to reduce energy consumption, organizing service opportunities in underserved communities, to challenging discriminatory laws and practices. The practice of good citizenship is not limited to the municipality or community in which a person lives—it extends to their participation with their department, campus, and college or university, such as celebrating a colleague's notable accomplishment.

However, scholars of citizenship education stress that good citizenship must be taught and is therefore both a skill and a learning outcome.[35] For student affairs professionals, citizenship is a two-fold competency: a skill to

be practiced as a citizen of the department and of the campus in which they work, and also as a value to be instilled to students. Collegiality, teamwork, and staff recognition are certainly ways in which student affairs professionals practice citizenship in their roles as colleagues and employees. Creating experiences for students which teach citizenship skills are arguably more intricate. In practical terms, student affairs professionals must respect dissenting opinions, allow others to express their ideas, and help each other and students work towards a mutually acceptable resolution within a civil and respectful context.

Assessment

Assessment in student affairs is increasingly important for justifying costs, services, and programs; guiding policy and staffing decisions; and improving the quality of student services, programs, and learning outcomes.[36] Generally, assessment in student affairs is not intended to assess an individual student's learning or experience, but to collect data that provides answers on larger questions—such as why a particular group of students has lower rates of persistence or graduation than other students or why students choose to move out of residence halls after their first year of college. At some colleges and universities, only student affairs professionals with specialized training and expertise conduct assessment, but assessment skills are increasingly expected among many student affairs professionals regardless of their principal area of work.[37]

The assessment studies undertaken by student affairs professionals could and should be of great interest to librarians. Student affairs professionals are founts of qualitative and quantitative data about student populations and services. For example, librarians who are weighing whether or not to reduce computer labs and public workstations in libraries are probably interested in whether students have access to computers elsewhere. Their colleagues in housing and residential life may have already surveyed the student population to determine how many students bring laptops and desktops to campus as they decide how much network infrastructure is required in the residence halls.

FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

Student affairs organizations at many colleges and universities compose a diverse set of functional areas that provide student services and academic

support. Many student affairs organizations are organized very differently depending on the unique needs of the campus. Therefore the functional areas of student affairs organizations are very different between two-year and four-year colleges and universities, small liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, and research universities. A chief student affairs administrator is generally responsible for the operations of student affairs organizations, but student affairs and academic affairs are unified as a single reporting unit at some colleges and universities. Other colleges and universities have recently aligned some student affairs functional areas, such as admissions and financial aid offices, with academic affairs.[38]

Student affairs scholars generally regard the following functional areas as the core functions of student affairs organizations. These functional areas are among the oldest domains of student affairs and are organized under a chief student affairs administrator more consistently than other functional areas.[39] Each of the functional areas has its own professional associations, conferences, journals, and other publications that provide support, continuing education, and investigations of emerging trends.

Academic Advising

Wesley R. Habley declared, "Academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution."[40] Academic advisors help students develop a plan of study that successfully leads to the student's goals. The process involves learning the student's desired outcomes; guiding the student through declaring a major and course selection; career counseling; and connecting the student with opportunities for internships, independent study, and experiential learning. Faculty might act as academic advisors to students with declared majors in their respective academic programs at many small colleges and universities, but frequently academic advisors are student affairs professionals dedicated to advising cohorts of students throughout their college experience.

Academic advising is linked to a number of important outcomes, including students' satisfaction with their academic programs, achievement for underprepared and underperforming students, and—arguably most important—student persistence.[41] Consequently, academic advising is increasingly following a developmental advising model. The academic advisor is a mentor for the student, appreciating the student's preferred

learning styles, identifying the student's life goals, and promoting campus and community resources. As Richard Light claims, "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience."[42]

Admissions/Enrollment Management

Admissions is a complex function. Admissions officers develop comprehensive plans for identifying and recruiting the right mix of students for the college or university. They provide information to prospective students on the breadth of academic programs and opportunities available at the campus. They also help the student and the family decide if the college or university is the right match for the student's academic talent, aspirations, and background. Consequently, admissions officers are uniquely trained to listen carefully to students' interests and to quickly develop a keen insight into the student's background. Admissions officers are not simply seeking the brightest or most academically gifted prospective students, but they are also complementing the college or university's diverse student body by seeking students with creative and athletic promise.

At some campuses, admissions functions are organized into an enrollment management function. In an enrollment management function, the admissions, financial aid, marketing, and student records professionals work together closely to craft a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan. It is increasingly common that the enrollment management functional area reports to a college or university provost or chief academic officer rather than a student affairs organization.[43]

Campus Ministries

Many student affairs professionals believe that spiritual development is an integral part of educating the whole student. According to Jennifer Capeheart-Meningall, "Spirituality is one of the ways people construct knowledge and meaning."[44] Spirituality and religious beliefs affect the development of students' identities, but also provide opportunities for self-reflection and reasoning. Alexander W. Astin noted that students who are involved in religious or spiritual programs at their colleges or universities are likely to report greater satisfaction with campus life, a stronger sense of community, better physical and psychological well-being, and stronger academic performance than students who are not involved.[45]

This functional area of student affairs organizations is commonly referred to as campus ministries. Colleges and universities affiliated with a specific faith often employ chaplains and other spiritual advisors who coordinate spiritual programs and activities across the campus. Chaplains might also play a role in academic affairs at faith-affiliated colleges and universities which integrate spiritual teachings into the curriculum. They may lead religious services, especially if the college or university maintains houses of worship. Public colleges and universities will often coordinate spiritual programs and activities with houses of worship located in their communities. Off-campus spiritual advisors tend to the needs of the students who belong to their faiths, but public colleges and universities will often make space and resources available for faith-affiliated student organizations.

Campus Safety and Police Services

Campus safety and police are the principal law enforcement and public safety officers for colleges and universities. The culture and climate of campus safety and police services are subtly different from municipal police agencies. Whereas the focus of municipal police agencies is often law enforcement, the focus of campus safety and campus police services is frequently crime prevention because of the educational mission of higher education.[46]

There are multiple organizational models for campus safety and police services, depending on what the college or university administration values about safety and its security initiatives. At many colleges and universities, campus safety and police services report directly to the president or chancellor to facilitate more efficient, rapid communication regarding incidents on campus. A reporting line to business affairs is also a common organizational model and often reflects the campus's desire to coordinate campus safety with facilities, human resources, and public relations operations.

When campus safety and police services report to a student affairs organization, however, the emphasis of their work is often on crime prevention and educating students on personal security and campus safety. These initiatives often include coordinating volunteer safety escorts and student patrol officers to monitor campus during off hours, educating students on traffic and pedestrian safety, and participating in outreach to students residing in campus housing.[47]

Career Services

Advising students on career exploration and planning is the principal responsibility of student affairs professionals employed in career services. They help students locate information on internships, prospective employers, and current job openings. Frequently, career services provides students with resume-writing skills and resume critiques, interviewing skills, and strategies for negotiating salaries and benefits. Most importantly, however, student affairs professionals working in career services are skillful counselors who help students identify their career interests, recognize their personal strengths and loves, and hone their job search to professional areas that best match their preferences. Increasingly, career services professionals are reaching out to first-year students to instill career planning early in the academic experience.[48] Many also work with alumni who are exploring new careers or experiencing a career interruption.

Commuter Services

Commuter services is often responsible for addressing the needs of students who reside in off-campus housing. The most common functions of commuter services include helping students locate affordable housing and information regarding landlords and leases. It helps students negotiate tenant and landlord relationships and educate students how to be good neighbors and roommates. However, commuter services professionals also advocate for off-campus students in regards to access to and information about recreational facilities, events and programs, dining options, and representation in student organizations. At some college and universities, commuter services is also responsible for parking services and adjudicating parking fines and other disputes.

Community Service and Service Learning

Community service and service learning programs promote volunteer activity among students and are often designed to foster civic responsibility. Many student affairs professionals who work in this area collect information regarding volunteer opportunities in the community, conduct outreach with community agencies, and coordinate campus service learning days. They also advise individual students, student organizations, and Greek houses on service opportunities within the community. Many student affairs professionals working in community service and service learning programs also act as

consultants for university administration on matters of civic engagement and responsibility. Educating administrators on the concerns of community residents and businesses that are neighbors to campuses has become especially prevalent as universities engage in capital expansion projects.[49]

Dean of Students Office

The student affairs professionals who compose the Dean of Students office help students find solutions to dilemmas that threaten to disrupt their academic studies. This includes resolving conflicts between students and faculty, providing guidance on select legal issues, and working with students to find a voice in the campus on student-related concerns. The Dean of Students office is also typically charged with upholding standards of behavior and integrity among the students, such as mediating allegations of plagiarism. Often it serves as the college or university's touchstone for student-related issues. The Dean of Students office coordinates the work of many of the other student affairs programs and services.

Disability Support Services

The goal of disability support services is generally to help students with disabilities participate fully in campus life and derive the greatest benefit possible from their educational experience. As such, they assess students' unique needs and plan ways in which students succeed despite physical or academic impediments. This might include facilitating transcription services for hearing-impaired students or negotiating with publishers for the rights to convert a print source to an audio source so that a textbook may be narrated for the student. The student affairs professionals employed in this area assume many roles—educating college or university administration on the physical access of the campus and its resources, ensuring legal compliance to laws and rules regarding accommodation, helping faculty identify ways to accommodate the needs of particular students, and advising students on their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Greek Affairs

Student affairs professionals who manage Greek affairs serve as liaisons between the college or university and the fraternity and sorority chapters that are chartered in the area. They monitor the Greek houses for standards of safety and responsibility, and they help the houses determine their autonomy

and accountability. Student affairs professionals working in Greek affairs are generally responsible for enforcing the rigors of scholarship, service, and leadership that enable the houses to remain on the campus. They might also provide training to house officers on the management skills necessary for running their houses successfully and help mediate incidents that violate the houses' rules of conduct and personal responsibility.

Health Services and Counseling Services

Health and counseling services for students are commonly organized under student affairs organizations. Physicians and mental health counselors tend to the physical and psychological well-being of students, but educational programming is also a significant mission of many student health services centers. Student affairs professionals are employed as health educators, who participate in student outreach and create awareness of health-related issues, prevention, and resources. They help students identify strategies for healthy living, regulating stress, and anger management. Health services and counseling professionals collaborate closely with other functional areas, such as housing and academic advisors, to coordinate referrals.

Housing/Residential Life

The principal responsibility of housing and residential life is to provide safe living experiences for students who reside in campus housing. At many colleges and universities, housing and residential life is a single functional area, but other colleges and universities manage the functional areas separately. Housing may be charged with managing room assignments, dining operations, and the facilities of the residence halls. Residential life may be charged with educational and social programming, conflict resolution between students, and the supervision of students and the resident assistants. Residence halls are recognized as one of the primary settings for student learning and growth, and many housing and residential life programs have created living-learning communities where students who share common interests or aspirations live together and participate in classes and educational programs in the residence halls.[50]

Many of the student affairs professionals employed in housing and residential life live in the residence halls to ensure student safety and rapid responses to emergencies. "Living in" is a good way for student affairs professionals to develop intimate knowledge of the campus and insight into stu-

dent experiences and backgrounds. Consequently, housing and residential life are areas where many entry-level student affairs professionals begin their careers.[51]

Judicial Affairs

The student affairs professionals who coordinate the activities of judicial affairs offices are principally charged with enforcing the student code of conduct and campus rules. Generally, they investigate claims of behavioral misconduct referred to their office by faculty, campus safety and police officers, housing and residential life professionals, and municipal police agencies. Judicial affairs professionals listen to students' perspectives on infractions and attempt to work with the students to develop a sense of personal accountability.

Student discipline provides a unique moment for student affairs professionals to gauge the level of moral reasoning employed by students and to make a developmental impact on students' moral reasoning. The role of judicial affairs professionals has traditionally offered an opportunity to foster the personal growth of students as part of the educational process.[52] The problem of student discipline has long posed a dilemma for student affairs professionals, however. The student's right to due process and the potentially serious consequences of discipline demand a judicial process with tightly followed rules and policies. Nonetheless, the responses to student discipline provide a valuable opportunity to foster a student's moral development and ethical decision making.

Judicial affairs professionals formulate educational responses to student discipline rather than mere punitive measures. The judicial affairs officer can challenge the student's current level of development and facilitate development to a more sophisticated level of moral reasoning. Judicial affairs officers are frequently trained in conflict resolution, higher education law, and due process; such student affairs professionals are commonly attorneys.[53]

Leadership Programs

Leadership programs are focused on developing leadership skills in students, primarily through a combination of programs and experiences. Programs can be connected with an academic program and take the form of credit-bearing courses or can be a series of extracurricular programs that lead to a certificate. Leadership programs that are embedded in an academic program are gener-

ally focused on developing leadership traits specific to a field of study. The student affairs professionals will frequently collaborate with faculty to teach credit-bearing courses in which students learn skills such as strategic planning within a business context or collaborating with community agencies to design parent-outreach programs within a school district.

Leadership programs take a different shape when the programs are extracurricular. The student affairs professionals facilitate problem-solving exercises and workshops that foster teamwork, strategic planning, vision, and other vital skills. Additionally, student affairs professionals help the students connect leadership skills to daily living situations and bring students together with local industry leaders.

Multicultural Student Services

Offices of multicultural student services are focused on supporting and integrating students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education with the majority culture of the campus. The student affairs professionals who work in this area foster a campus climate that is welcoming and inclusive for all students, coordinate celebrations of cultural heritage and expression, connect students with academic and community resources, and help underrepresented students navigate the complexity of majority culture campuses.

Improving student retention is one of the underlying goals for multicultural student services, particularly at campuses that are working towards increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the student community.[54] Services and programs that support African American, Latino/a, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native American students are commonly integrated into a functional area that serves the particular needs of each community, but larger colleges and universities might have decentralized services where each group of underrepresented students is served by its own office and programs. Women students and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students are sometimes included in multicultural student services functional areas, but may be served by other student affairs programs specifically tailored to their particular needs.[55]

Orientation/New Student Programs

Student affairs professionals are often responsible for coordinating orientation programs for first-year and transfer students and for managing programs which help students transition successfully to higher education. Their pri-

mary purpose is to orient the students to the college or university's history, traditions, and expectations, while preparing the students to be responsible campus citizens. They educate the students on campus and community resources and provide information regarding housing, financial aid, course registration, and dining options. They facilitate discussions on sexual harassment, underage drinking, violence, and other topics related to expectations of conduct and community living. Student affairs professionals working in this area may arrange campus tours for prospective students and provide information to parents.

New student programs have recently begun to expand beyond campus tours and orientation sessions that last one or a few days. Such programs are evolving to include first-year experience programs that integrate student affairs and academic programs, learning outcomes, and faculty participation in an orientation that spans the students' first year of college.[56] Programs are increasingly designed to focus on at-risk or underperforming students, developing a cohort that brings the students together throughout their college experience and providing workshops that strengthen students' research, writing, and study skills.[57]

Recreation and Fitness

Recreation and fitness programs are increasingly important areas of student affairs organizations. Their primary purpose is educating students on wellness, which can include coordinating a variety of physical activities and maintaining facilities but is increasingly expanding to educate entire campus communities on proper nutrition, lifestyle choices, and awareness of healthy living. Recent studies indicate as many as 90 percent of undergraduate students use recreation and fitness facilities.[58] Many campuses are experiencing a construction and expansion "boom" in recreation and fitness facilities and programs. Such facilities are perceived as being increasingly critical to student satisfaction and prospective students' decisions to enroll.[59]

Student Activities

Student activities represents a broad range of programs and services for students. It provides a way for students to become engaged in campus life outside of the classroom. Student activities encompasses cultural programs such as heritage celebrations, entertainment and recreational activities such as film festivals and dances, and sponsored outings such as day trips to muse-

ums or nature preserves. Students involved in activities are more likely to persist to graduation than students who are not involved, and involved students also make greater gains in intellectual and psychosocial skills and are more satisfied with their college experiences than uninvolved students.[60] As a result, many of the programs are designed to expose students to new perspectives and to encourage participation in campus governance, community service, and student organizations.[61] Many of the programs and services coordinated by student activities may, in fact, be coordinated by other student affairs functional areas, such as student unions or multicultural student services, at larger colleges and universities with a decentralized student affairs organization.

Student Unions/Student Centers

Student unions or student centers are generally organizations that serve as the "hub" of student activity and programming on campuses. They are gathering places for students to study, lounge, and connect with convenient services, such as coffee houses, food courts, bookstores, and computer labs. Campuses with centralized student affairs organizations will often bring career services, student activities, multicultural student services, and other areas together in the student union. At campuses with decentralized student affairs organizations, the functional areas are frequently located at other areas of the campus. The student union will consequently serve as the primary entertainment venue for recreational activities. Student affairs professionals with experience in programming and event planning frequently manage student unions.

EDUCATION AND PREPARATION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Many student affairs professionals hold master's degrees, and many colleges and universities require a master's degree for an entry-level student affairs position. Graduate programs that traditionally place students into student affairs positions are variously called higher education administration, college student personnel administration, educational leadership, college student affairs, and college student development. Many of these programs are offered through colleges or schools of education.

Each program emphasizes different core skills. Some programs focus on administration, others focus on counseling (and might even require licensure for graduation), and others on teaching and communication skills. Some programs provide a stronger theoretical foundation for student affairs

practice, and still others will emphasize practical experiences. Most graduate programs will provide opportunities for graduate students to participate in an assistantship or practicum, either at their home campus or with a partner campus, as a way of providing students with professional experiences. As in librarianship, many students enrolled in student affairs graduate programs will find their first position after graduation based on the context and strength of their assistantship and practicum experiences.

Doctoral degrees are rarely required for entry-level positions in student affairs. However, doctoral degrees are increasingly expected among student affairs professionals who hold dean and associate dean positions or serve as directors of housing and residential life, academic advising, student unions, career services, admissions, and financial aid. Like the master's degree, a doctoral degree in a specific discipline is not always required, but higher education administration is the most frequent doctoral degree held by student affairs professionals.[62]

However, not every student affairs professional earns a master's degree in an academic discipline that provides a theoretical or practical foundation for working in student affairs. A bachelor's degree and relevant work experience are sufficient at some colleges and universities, while others employ student affairs professionals who earned master's degrees outside of the traditional areas of study. A business student might gain relevant professional experience by developing a business plan with a department of housing and residential life that maximizes the number of occupied beds in the residence halls. A nursing student could acquire significant knowledge of the needs of people with disabilities during an internship with a department of disability support services. Student affairs professionals with law degrees are not uncommon in judicial affairs, and masters of business administration are reasonably common for positions in business affairs and management.[63]

How do people "find" student affairs as a profession? Just as in librarianship, many people are introduced to the profession through their experiences in student employment. James Conneely speaks for many student affairs professionals, "Some found the profession by accident, but many enjoyed their experiences as a student leader or student worker. The truth is, very few children talk about being a student affairs professional when they grow up! Many people find the profession through work as an undergraduate or graduate staff person."[64] Housing and residential life employ large numbers of students as resident assistants and in other capacities; student unions hire

students to participate in programming events and manage service desks; counseling and health services manage peer counselors; and recreation and fitness facilities have significant numbers of student staff to operate the physical facilities.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND CORE PUBLICATIONS

There are many professional associations and organizations that cater to the many dimensions of the student affairs profession—too many to be addressed in this chapter! Each of the functional areas mentioned earlier in this chapter has its own associations and organizations that are specifically tailored to its unique issues, trends, research, and professional development needs. However, a few associations merit an overview here because of their broad scope of interests, appeal to student affairs professionals across the breadth of functional areas, and traditional collaboration with faculty and staff outside of student affairs.

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (formerly the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators)—are the oldest professional associations for student affairs professionals. Their annual conferences bring together student affairs professionals from many functional areas at many diverse colleges and universities. ACPA represents more than 8,500 members at more than 1,500 private and public colleges and universities in the United States and globally. NASPA is the older and larger of the associations. Founded in 1919, it represents more than eleven thousand members at more than 1,400 colleges and universities.

The missions and scope of ACPA and NASPA are very similar, with many members belonging to both associations simultaneously. ACPA is favored by mid-career student affairs professionals based on the association's emphasis on leadership development, supervisory skills, and other continuing education programs. NASPA has attracted greater numbers of new student affairs professionals in recent years through its partnerships with the Association of College and University Housing Officers–International (ACUHO-I) to provide job placement exchanges and networking opportunities.

ACUHO-I is specifically focused on the residential living experiences of students. It has more than nine hundred college and university housing organizations and more than two hundred corporations as members. Together,

its members provide housing for approximately 1.8 million students. The annual conferences emphasize current research on student learning outside the classroom and innovation in housing services, facilities, and architecture.

There are also a number of key journals that are worth exploring which delve deeper into emerging research, policy analyses, and literature reviews of student affairs. The *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, Journal of College Student Development, New Directions for Student Services, Career Development Quarterly, Journal of College and University Student Housing, Journal of College and University Law, Higher Education Review, Research in Higher Education,* and the *Journal of Higher Education* are leading, peer-reviewed scholarly journals which publish emerging research. *NACADA Journal, About Campus, Campus Law Enforcement Journal, Journal of College Admissions, Journal of Student Financial Aid, Journal of Career Planning and Employment, Talking Stick, Journal of Technology in Student Affairs, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, and *Black Issues in Higher Education* are not peer-reviewed journals but share perspectives from practitioners across student affairs and higher education.

EMERGING ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student affairs is evolving rapidly to meet the needs and expectations of today's college students. The millennial generation has brought greater diversity to college campuses. Greater numbers of students are also attending college with complex personal and health issues that profoundly challenge the capacities for student health services and notions of campus and personal safety. Legal issues present ambiguous expectations for student affairs professionals in regards to student privacy and confidentiality and blur the boundaries for ensuring the welfare of students. Parents are also playing a significantly stronger and more visible role in students' lives. Technology is radically shaping the way the students interact with each other and with the university, as well as transforming how student affairs professionals communicate with each other in times of crisis. The issues that pose the greatest challenges to student affairs professionals are different for each college and university, but there are many emerging issues that are common to most campuses today. The following emerging issues have generated significant discussion in recent years in the student affairs profession.

Diversity

A racially and ethnically diverse campus provides educationally meaningful experiences for students. There is a growing body of research that proposes

that critical-thinking skills, teamwork, tolerance, cultural appreciation and knowledge, and inclusion are strengthened when students are exposed to students with perspectives and backgrounds different from their own.[65] Diversity scholars contend that students make the strongest gains on diversity-related educational outcomes through interactions that students of diverse backgrounds have with each other on a daily, informal basis.[66] These interactions take place in residence halls, social activities, workplaces, and student organizations. The first-year housing arrangement might be the very first time that a white student from rural Minnesota has met an African American student from urban Chicago. The subsequent tension can result in serious consequences including isolation and victimization—but also incredible benefits if negotiated carefully.

Student affairs professionals are ideally suited to help students learn about diversity and negotiate the complex interactions that can result in conflict. Tolerance, openness, acceptance, and respect for others are core values of the profession, and student affairs professionals are front and center in students' daily interactions outside of the classroom. Their knowledge and insight about student experiences, backgrounds, and frustrations have often resulted in better institutional policies, programs, and services.[67] Consequently, the student affairs profession has addressed diversity at national conferences since the 1960s and continues to aggressively emphasize diversity skills and multicultural competencies in graduate programs and in continuing education opportunities for student affairs professionals.[68]

Student affairs professionals seek collaborations with faculty and with administrators to resolve tensions that stem from diversity, remedy grievances, and advocate for stronger academic and social support for students who are underrepresented at the campus. Arthur Sandeen and Margaret J. Barr call such a leadership role "the most critical of all for student affairs professionals to assume" and emphasize the importance of the steps that student affairs professionals should take in making diversity a cornerstone of their professional lives.[69]

Student Safety and Security

Are students responsible for their own personal safety on campus, or should the college or university play a role? The message provided to colleges and universities by society and by the courts has grown ambiguous over the decades. For much of American higher education's history, the courts have charged

colleges and universities with safeguarding students. Historically, the legal concept of *in loco parentis* means literally "in place of the parent." Colleges and universities carefully monitored student behavior, enforced codes of conduct, and had significant latitude in deciding where and when students could socialize, spend their leisure time, and return to campus. Much of the monitoring and enforcement fell to student affairs professionals. However, *in loco parentis* eroded with changes in society and legal opinion during and after the 1960s. Responsibility for student conduct and for personal safety and security rested largely with the individual student. Today, student affairs professionals report that they are actively studying ways to teach students greater responsibility for personal security.

They are also creating mechanisms to make the campus safer. The shooting rampage at Virginia Tech University in 2007 left thirty-two students and faculty dead. Attitudes on student safety and security changed almost overnight. Many colleges and universities have moved towards implementing emergency alert notification systems and adopting crisis response plans. The scale of such crisis planning is immense—many crisis plans involve students directly for the first time. Student affairs professionals are training students in how to protect themselves in the event of an active shooter on campus, and they encourage students to monitor their surroundings closely and report suspicious activity immediately.[70] Cameras and other monitoring devices are strategically placed on campuses in increasing numbers as well.[71]

Mental Health Issues

The number of students entering higher education with previously diagnosed mental health issues has increased dramatically since the 1990s.[72] Previously, such students may not have attended college or may have attended a local college while living with family. Improvements in medications and counseling services have enabled many students with mental health issues to pursue educational opportunities unencumbered. However, not all students adjust to campus life easily. Some students stop taking necessary medication when they are not under the supervision of their parents or family physician, while other students' mental health issues are aggravated by new stresses. Still others exhibit signs of unusual behavior or disorganized thinking for the first time during college.

Student affairs professionals are challenged to quickly recognize signs of mental health issues. Is inappropriate, immature, or impulsive behavior mask-

ing an underlying psychological issue? Does the student demonstrate signs of depression, withdrawal, or anger? Does the student have the potential to harm himself or others? Whatever the behaviors, student affairs professionals are trained to intervene and decide if the student should be held accountable for his or her behavior through contracts for good community living, campus judicial processes, or mandated referrals to counseling services.

Parent Involvement

While librarians may not hear *helicopter parent* very often, student affairs professionals are intimately familiar with the phrase! Helicopter parents "hover" over their college student children, often intervening in situations or making decisions on behalf of their child that should be left to the student to resolve. Student affairs professionals have reported that parents' involvement in their children's college education has increased dramatically since the 1990s.[73]

Many student affairs professionals blame the cell phone. With so many families connected by family calling plans, it's easy for a student to quickly call home after the latest disagreement with a roommate or frustration with a class assignment. The millennial generation of students seem particularly attached to their families.

Many colleges and universities have responded to parents' involvement in their children's higher education and established an office of parent concerns. These offices employ student affairs professionals to listen to parents' concerns—which range from receiving information on tuition and fees to explaining grading policies. Student affairs professionals also ensure that parents have a voice in campus decisions. Alumni affairs, fundraising offices, and other areas of campus have reported excellent benefits by involving parents more closely in campus life.

Campus Environments

Academic programs and student services are not enough to create a learning community. Students must *believe* in something that brings people together for a shared experience and identity. Traditions, demography, and institutional mission are all vital elements of creating a campus culture. However, the environment does not prove easy terrain for all students, nor are all environments healthy for student learning.

Small campuses might be stifling to some students, and very large campuses can make students lonely or homesick if they are unable to make con-

nections with others easily. Some colleges and universities rely heavily on codes of conduct to regulate student behavior, whereas others follow an honor code that encourages individual styles of learning and expression. Racially and ethnically diverse colleges and universities stimulate tolerance between different student groups when mutual respect is observed; sadly, other diverse campuses experience racial tension or convey unintended messages that chill the campus environment for certain student groups. Campus traditions and symbols impact student culture—the Aggie Bonfire at Texas A&M University grew from a simple bonfire that celebrated a college rivalry seventy years ago to an elaborate ritual with five thousand participants constructing a forty-foot pyramid the year that the elaborate structure collapsed and killed twelve students.

Increasingly, student affairs professionals use the college or university's culture as a lens for analyzing and understanding how students' experiences influence their behavior and their learning. Are the faculty touting a high standard of achievement yet providing little feedback to students in regard to written work and research? The result will probably be student frustration, complaints about lack of access to instructors, and lower retention rates. Student affairs professionals, however, are among the first who notice the effect on the students and hear their confusion. Frequently, university leaders call upon student affairs professionals to interpret student culture, facilitate discussions with vocal student groups, and remedy situations that have reached crisis proportions. Student affairs professionals understand how the campus influences student learning and student development and helps the campus adapt its culture to promote a successful learning environment. As Sandeen and Barr say, "Campus culture as a learning environment is a bit like religion… . We have to believe in it to make it work."[74]

Alcohol Issues

Alcohol use and abuse have increased significantly on college campuses. Fifty percent of today's college students have consumed alcohol prior to entering college.[75] The National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism announced four hundred thousand self-reported incidents of sexual assault involving alcohol occurred on college campuses in 2002, and 1,400 college students died from alcohol poisoning or accidents involving alcohol. Student injuries, vandalism and destruction of property, sexually transmitted diseases, and academic problems are reported to be significantly higher on college campuses where high percentages of students consume alcohol.[76]

Certainly student affairs professionals are concerned with how to educate students on alcohol issues while maintaining standards for campus and community safety. However, this is no easy task. The consumption of alcohol is illegal for most traditional-aged college students, and many campuses ban the possession of alcohol even for students over the age of twenty-one. Alcohol use has largely moved to areas of campus life where student affairs professionals have little direct control—off-campus apartments, fraternity and sorority houses, and bars and nightclubs with lax enforcement. Binge drinking has subsequently become more widely practiced in recent years.[77]

Role of Technology

If librarians are at the forefront of the emerging technologies that are shaping how educators connect with students, student affairs colleagues are at the front lines along with librarians. Growth in technology has exploded in student affairs and is rapidly changing how student affairs professionals communicate with each other and with students, respond to campus crises, facilitate student learning, and transform facilities and services. Students expect technology threaded through their living and learning experiences, and student affairs has risen to the challenges in a number of ways. Academic advisors offer virtual advising appointments via webcams and instant messaging. Tours of campuses and demonstrations of fitness machines are available on YouTube. Residence halls provide wireless networks and notification by text messaging when laundry facilities have finished students' laundry. Students are encouraged to join Facebook groups created by student affairs professionals to advertise upcoming programs and resources.

Parents' expectations, too, are evolving, as they want information and updates more consistently from student affairs professionals. Many student affairs organizations have responded by creating sections of their websites specifically aimed at parents, with important dates (such as room assignments), programs of interest to parents, and ways for parents to become involved in campus affairs. Some colleges and universities even strategically place webcams that broadcast in real time to give viewers a window into campus life without having to set foot on the physical campus.[78]

Social networking has certainly had an impact on student behavior. Student affairs professionals working in residential life and judicial affairs have counseled students whose alcohol consumption and misconduct are chronicled on Facebook and YouTube. Residential life staff report mediating

roommate conflicts that occurred wholly via instant messaging—sometimes with the students sitting in the same dorm room with no verbal communication at all.[79] Career counselors advise students on removing questionably tasteful Facebook photos and carefully considering the implications of their online presence while seeking internships and entering the workforce. Multicultural student services staff document racially hostile anonymous postings on campus websites, online student newspapers, and online bulletin boards that create a chilling effect for minority students.[80]

Many colleges and universities with distance learning programs are integrating student affairs programs online, especially academic advising, financial aid, and career services.[81] An emerging discussion among student affairs professionals is how to build a sense of community among students who principally interact with each other online. This is particularly of interest to student affairs professionals who are employed at campuses with strong distance learning programs. However, student affairs professionals at residential colleges and universities are rethinking ways to connect with the students who live in their residence halls—they report that it's increasingly difficult to interest students in programs and facilitate discussions when virtual worlds, social networking, and video-on-demand services compete for the students' attention and time.[82]

Rapid crisis response is especially critical as emergencies unfold. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies, public broadcast systems, and emergency notification text-messaging systems are often managed by student affairs professionals. Mobile devices and pagers are becoming standard tools of the trade for student affairs professionals who must respond to crises at any hour of the day or night. Winston, Creamer, and Miller wrote at the start of the last decade, "The key word for student affairs in the twenty-first century is *connectivity*."[83] Given the urgency on many campuses for better coordination and faster communication, connectivity is certain to play an ever-increasing role in the coming years.

CONCLUSION

The role of student affairs in higher education is complex. Historically, the student affairs profession emerged from the need to attend to issues of student conduct and the administrative functions of the college or university. Today, student affairs professionals work in a variety of functional areas throughout colleges and universities, ranging from admissions to academic

advising to housing and residential life. The role of student affairs professionals has also changed from one focused on administration to one focused on education. As institutions have shifted away from acting *in loco parentis*, the purpose of student affairs changed from a disciplinary role to an educational role. Student affairs professionals perceive that considerable learning and growth take place for students outside the classroom.

The core purpose of student affairs today is to understand how students develop intellectually, psychosocially, and emotionally and to create meaningful experiences that stimulate student development. Core values such as caring, helping, equality, and social justice inform much of the environments that student affairs professionals strive to create as the best conditions for student learning and success. In helping students develop stable identities, values, conflict resolution skills, communication skills, ethical standards, and tolerance, student affairs professionals help students prepare for career, leadership, and civic roles throughout their lifetimes.

A rich body of scholarship grounds student affairs practice in theory and research based in social science, education, law, and other disciplines. Professional associations and scholarly and trade literature connect student affairs professionals with each other and establish standards for professionalism and essential competencies. Emerging issues in higher education, such as the increasing diversity of students, the rise in mental health issues and alcohol consumption, the evolving role of technology on college campuses, parental involvement, and increased attention to safety and security are radically shaping the future of student affairs. Educating the whole student, however, remains the foundation of the profession, and collaboration with faculty and others will become increasingly paramount as student affairs professionals seek to understand and foster student learning in new and innovative directions.

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